

Governor Carney, Delaware Department of Agriculture Announce Interactive Dashboard

Online tool helps Delawareans understand, visualize farmland preserved in all three counties

DOVER, Del. – Governor John Carney and the Delaware Department of Agriculture announced on Thursday a new, [interactive dashboard](#) to help Delawareans better understand farmland preservation.

Delaware's statewide program made its first round of easement purchases in 1996, and has since preserved 22 percent of New Castle County farmland, 38 percent of Kent County farmland and 16 percent of Sussex County farmland. The Delaware Agricultural Lands Preservation Foundation selects those farms approved for easement purchase using an impartial discounted ranking system that maximizes benefits for taxpayers. The Foundation does not own the land, but rather purchases landowners' development rights and places a permanent agricultural conservation easement on the property.

The dashboard was released following an easement selection [announcement](#) that now preserves more than 127,000 acres of farmland in Delaware. The Delaware Department of Agriculture's new dashboard creates an interactive experience to help Delawareans see the value of farmland preservation.

"Delaware has a rich farming history and agriculture remains our number one industry," said **Governor Carney**. "We're excited

to announce this new, interactive dashboard in order to protect and preserve family farms and to help make them profitable.”

The innovative online dashboard was created through Operations Dashboard for ArcGIS, released by ESRI late last year. The Department is one of the early adopters of the software in the State and in farmland preservation throughout the country. Utilizing real-time data visualization, [visitors to the dashboard](#) are able to interact with operational data, see it visually, and gain insight on this round of farmland preservation.

“This new web dashboard helps stakeholders and the public interactively explore our latest round of easement purchases. I hope this increases awareness of the farmland preservation program and provides transparency into how we are spending taxpayer money,” said **Jimmy Kroon, DDA GIS Coordinator**. “The dashboard also provides stakeholders with quick access to information about preservation activities in specific areas of the state by allowing easement selections data to be filtered by county, legislative district, or watershed.”

Governor Carney’s [proposed budget](#) called for \$20 million for open space and farmland preservation.

This is the 22nd consecutive year of easement selections by the Delaware Agricultural Lands Preservation Foundation. The Foundation purchased the development rights of 41 farms totaling 3,534 acres, with one farm in New Castle County, thirty in Kent County, and ten in Sussex County preserved. In addition to over 127,000 acres in permanent easements, Delaware’s Aglands Preservation Program has over 45,000 acres of land enrolled in farmland preservation districts. Landowners must first voluntarily enroll their farm into a 10-year preservation district before they can sell an easement.

The Foundation’s Board of Trustees includes representatives

from agriculture and state agencies. Trustees are: Bob Garey, chairman; Bill Vanderwende, vice-chairman; L. Allen Messick Jr., treasurer; William H. "Chip" Narvel Jr., secretary; Secretary of Agriculture Michael Scuse; State Treasurer Ken Simpler; Secretary of Natural Resources and Environmental Control Shawn Garvin; Peter Martin; Theodore P. Bobola Jr.; Robert Emerson; and Janice Truitt.

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